

BER.NOW

Ina Abuschenko-Matwejewa, Swen Bernitz, V3
February 11 – March 25, 2023



GALERIE BERNAU

With the group exhibition *BER.NOW*, Galerie Bernau launches its eponymous annual programme for 2023, highlighting the work of artists based in and around Bernau, as well as the city itself. The first exhibition of the year presents three artistic positions that explore *spaces of transition*.

The Bernau-born artist **Ina Abuschenko-Matwejewa** presents the series *Die Reise im Zug* (2022), a selection of works on paper inspired by views from a moving train. Colourful stripes painted with acrylics are reminiscent of passing lights, buildings, and landscapes that the eye cannot focus on during a fast journey. In Galerie Bernau, Abuschenko-Matwejewa's work invites passers-by to enter the exhibition and recall their own most recent train ride: be it the journey they just took to Bernau, their daily commute to Berlin or a recent weekend trip to the countryside in Barnim. The series depicts views from a train window at different times of day, in different seasons and in different places. Colourful lines on a colourful background show a city at dawn, a sparsely lit track through Brandenburg fields at night or the Baltic coast on a bright summer day. The series also plays with the city's name Bernau bei Berlin, or Bernau „near Berlin“: Abuschenko-Matwejewa paints the big city as well as the countryside. Residents and visitors travel to Bernau from all over, making the journey by train as tourists or commuters. The artist leaves it to the viewer to decide the time and place in which each landscape is embedded.

Sometimes, however, the view out of the train window also reflects an interior world. When the eyes cannot keep up with the speed of the train and the passing landscapes transform into blurred streaks, one's own thoughts and fellow passengers push themselves into the foreground. This is described by writer Fariba Vafi in her story *Die Reise im Zug*, the inspiration for the first work in Abuschenko-Matwejewa's series. Vafi tells a story of a woman from Iran who travels through Germany by train to visit her daughter. On the way, the woman thinks back to a special train journey, where she travelled with relatives to a wedding whilst pregnant with her daughter. Torn between the family hustle and bustle inside the compartment and her own personal worries and desires, she looked out of the train window, her thoughts wandering between memory and dreams and the here and now.

The work of **V3 (Veruschka Bohn)** also explores the idea of transition. Her performance video *Code Act, Taiwan Version* (2020) was created in Taiwan during the first summer of the Corona pandemic. It shows V3 interacting with a bar stool in various public places in the city of Kaohsiung and in a dark room at the Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Art. The choreography of the performance and the dramaturgy of the video are engaging. The seat of the stool becomes a stage on which the artist, reminiscent of a statue, moves energetically or in slow motion. The artist and the stool interact with each other: at times V3 crouches on the stool as if glued to it; or the chair seems to sit on her, forcing her to the floor. At other times V3 appears to gain the upper hand over the prop, balancing on it so breathtakingly that the stool appears in danger of toppling over. The artist explores the seating stage and finally conquers it. In doing so, she acts as a human sculpture and as a dancer. This tension is reflected in the video editing. Several performances at different locations are stitched together, interspersed with scenes from the public space of Kaohsiung. This way, expanding the physical space of the performance to include urban space, the artist's body enters into a dialogue with her surroundings: She poses under a spotlight in the museum or rests motionless on the stool amidst the rush hour traffic roaring around her. Whilst public life around the world came to a standstill during the pandemic, *Code*



Act, Taiwan Version was created in a place where everyday life went on as usual. The video reflects an interplay between inside and outside, introversion and extroversion, private and public: between standstill and movement or lockdown and freedom.

Two other works by V3 in the exhibition explore the idea of being alone in natural surroundings or whilst surrounded by other people. The performance film *Bufón* (Spanish for *fool* or *clown*) was created in 2022 on the Canary Islands. It shows the artist alone in a volcanic landscape typical of the region. Appearing suddenly into view, the artist disappears again just as suddenly. Upon closer inspection, it is possible to see shallow waves on the water briefly flowing back and forth, and V3's foot or hand stroking the rock in the same rhythm. Is someone pressing fast-forward and rewind? And which direction is the right one? Only the artist knows the answer. The person in the photograph is similarly isolated. For the video performance *Boxes [he/her]* (2022), performers moved freely behind illuminated advertising boards typically found in S-Bahn stations in the Berlin public transport system, creating a three-dimensional space behind the monitors that does not exist. Through the medium of dance, they conquered a surface that determines the everyday life of all passengers: the screen.

In railway stations, just as in buildings, architects refer to stairs, lifts, doors, gates, escape routes and emergency exits as traffic areas. The photographer **Swen Bernitz** devotes his series *Poesie des Funktionalen* (2021) to these areas. The ten black-and-white photos printed on metal show the circulation areas in the Dessau Bauhaus complex in a way that is structurally impossible. Staircases and steps overlap like translucent veils; railings run towards each other, crossing in the centre of the picture; escape routes run in circles, leading nowhere. Bernitz creates these impossible built environments by double exposing his photographs of Bauhaus architecture. The negative is symmetrically mirrored and superimposed onto itself along an invisible line in the centre of the image. The infinite staircases and mirrored cabinets that emerge, invert the functionalist architecture of the Bauhaus into a dysfunctional, kaleidoscopic, hallucinatory visual experience that resembles a dizzy stupor. Within this stupor, the viewer desperately searches for something to hold on to. This is provided by the handles and railings which involuntarily catch the eye in these photographs. These elements were created by Marianne Brandt in 1923, a sculptor and designer in glass and metal who studied under famous Bauhaus teacher László Moholy-Nagy. Her designs were often adopted in industrial production and elegantly blended into the architecture of her colleague Walter Gropius at the Bauhaus Dessau. In homage to Brandt, Bernitz succeeds in drawing attention to the work of this artist.

In Bernitz's latest series, *Bauen ist ein technischer, kein ästhetischer Prozess* (2023), the photographer explores the former ADGB Trade Union School in Bernau, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The eight photographs were transferred onto transparent paper using a pigment printing process and seem to emanate light from within. Rather than casting a dark shadow, each mortar joint in the brick walls and each curtain fold emits a bright glow, making it hard to distinguish where the negative ends and the exposure begins. Both merge together to form motifs that cause the static architecture to vibrate: introverted corners are seemingly pushed outwards; the garden outside the window appears to have slipped into the interior of the house. Exterior and interior overlap to the point that the building seems to merge into its surroundings, and one must ask: can technical and aesthetic processes really be separated from one another?



The exhibition theme is inspired by the research project *Durchgang. Geschichte und Theorie transitorischer Räume* (Durchgang. History and Theory of Transitory Spaces) by the architectural historian Markus Dauss at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main between 2018 and 2021.

The exhibition was curated by Marie Egger.

Short biographies

Ina Abuschenko-Matwejewa (*1969 in Bernau) lives and works in Eberswalde. She studied painting and graphic arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Dresden from 1991 to 1996 and works as both a freelance artist and an art and movement therapist in the forensic psychiatric ward in Eberswalde. Her works have most recently been exhibited at Schloss Freienwalde (2021), the Produzentengalerie (2021) and KunstHaus e.V. Potsdam (2020/21), GalerieFENSTER/Kulturbühne (2021) and Kleine Galerie (2019) in Eberswalde, Kunsttempel Kassel (2019), Kunstverein Meißen (2018), and Kulturverein Schneverdingen (2018). She has been the recipient of funding on multiple occasions from the region of Brandenburg, receiving their Art Promotion Award in 2004.

Swen Bernitz (*1970 in Berlin, Friedrichshain) lives and works in Zossen. He is a self-taught artist and a member of the Brandenburg Association of Visual Artists. Since 2008 he has developed a series of conceptual long-term documentary projects on the topic of the built environment and urban cityscapes. Since 2018, his work has been shown at Neue Galerie Zossen (2022), Sprengel Museum in Hanover (2022), Fabricca del Vapore in Milan (2022), Prospekto Gallery in Vilnius (2022), Schloss Neuhardenberg (2022), Deutsche Werkstätten Hellerau in Dresden (2021), Photo Days in Trieste (2020) and numerous other fairs and exhibitions worldwide. He has received several international awards.

V3 (*1987) lives and works in Bernau, Brandenburg and Berlin. She studied film, photography, and painting at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Offenbach, where she graduated in 2015 with the video performance *How to Graduate from Art School*. Through performances, drawings, and video art, she is dedicated to unlearning useless knowledge and distorting everyday patterns of movement and thought. She likes to move her works to places where art is not expected. Her works have been exhibited at Silent Green in Berlin (2022), National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts in Taichung (2020), Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts in Taiwan (2020) and Nassauischer Kunstverein in Wiesbaden (2019), among others. She has won various international awards. In 2021, V3 completed the Goldrausch Künstlerinnenprojekt in Berlin. Recently, rbb Kultur published a portrait of her landscape performances.



Accompanying programme to the exhibition

We would like to invite you to the following events:

Saturday, 18 February 2023, 3 p.m.

Curator's tour of the exhibition with Marie Egger, further information, and tickets at:
www.galerie-bernau.de

Saturday, 18 February 2023, 6 pm

Premiere: Performance by V3/Veruschka Bohn, free admission
For BER.NOW, V3 has developed a new performance. Based on her experience with graphic recordings, she will draw live on site for the first time to create art.

Saturday, 25 March 2023, 4 pm

Reading by Nuschin Mameghanian-Prenzlow with Ina Abuschenko-Matwejew, free admission